

*President Eliot Cup*

# HANDICRAFT

PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE  
SOCIETY OF ARTS AND CRAFTS  
14 SOMERSET STREET, BOSTON  
MASSACHUSETTS VOL. II. NO. XII

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*Eliot Cup*

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MARCH 1904

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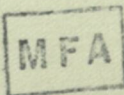
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# HANDICRAFT

VOL. II

MARCH 1904.

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ELIOT OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY

EDITORIAL: H. L. W.

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*Published monthly by The Society of Arts and Crafts, at  
14 Somerset Street, Boston, Massachusetts*

*Annual Subscription, \$1.00. Single Copies, Ten Cents.*

*Foreign Subscriptions, \$1.25*

*Subscriptions are only received for the full year and must  
commence with the April number*

*Checks, money orders, etc., should be made payable to The  
Society of Arts and Crafts*

*When a change of address is desired, both the old and the  
new address should be given*

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## **Principles of Handicraft**

I. MOTIVES. The motives of the true Craftsman are the love of good and beautiful work as applied to useful service, and the need of making an adequate livelihood. In no case can it be primarily the love of gain.

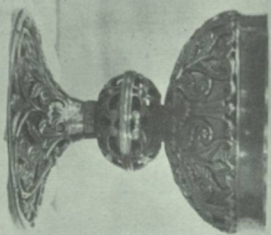
II. CONDITIONS. The conditions of true Handicraft are natural aptitude, thorough technical training, and a just appreciation of standards. The unit of labor should be an intelligent man, whose ability is used as a whole, and not subdivided for commercial purposes. He should exercise the faculty of design in connection with manual work, and manual work should be part of his training in design.

III. ARTISTIC CO-OPERATION. When the designer and the workman are not united in the same person, they should work together, each teaching the other his own special knowledge, so that the faculties of the designer and the workman may tend to become united in each.

IV. SOCIAL CO-OPERATION. Modern Craftsmanship requires that the idea of patronage be superseded by that of reciprocal service and co-operation.

V. RESULTS. The results aimed at are the training of true craftsmen, the developing of individual character in connection with artistic work, and the raising of standards of beauty in objects of use.

"It is only possible to answer for the final truth of principles, not for the direct success of plans."



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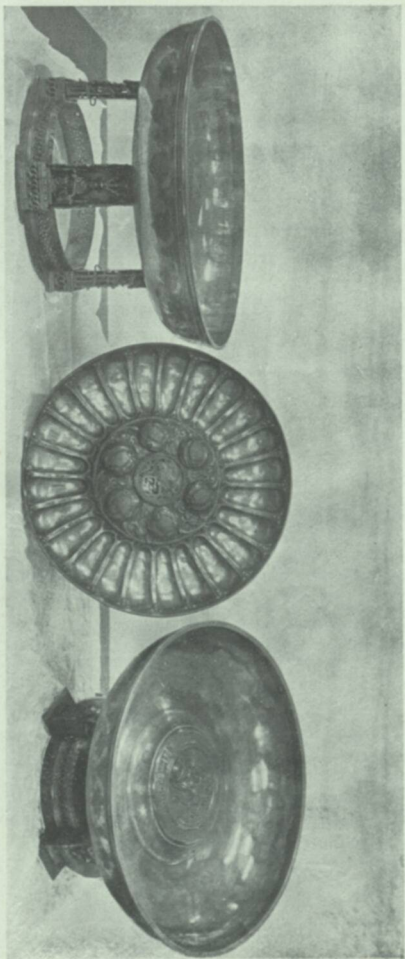


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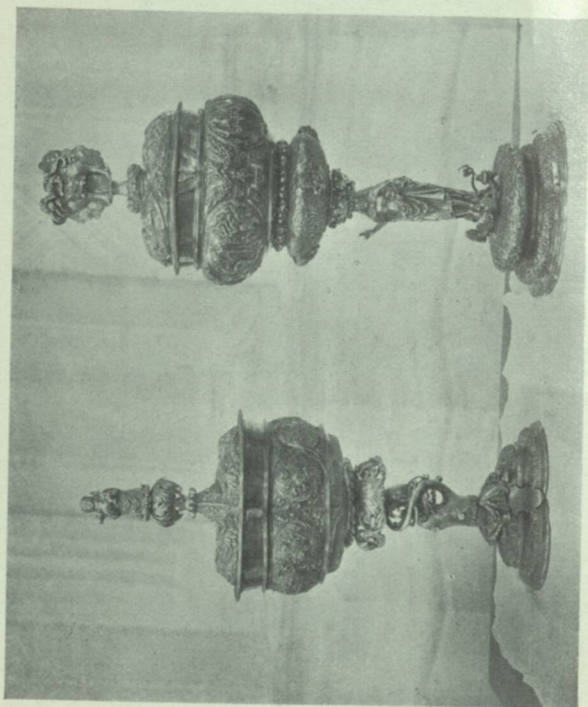




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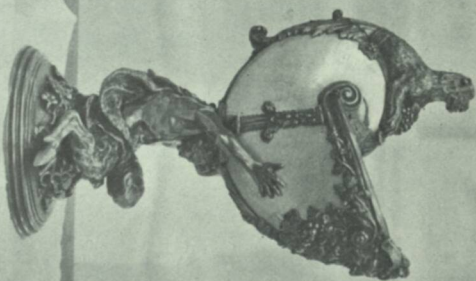
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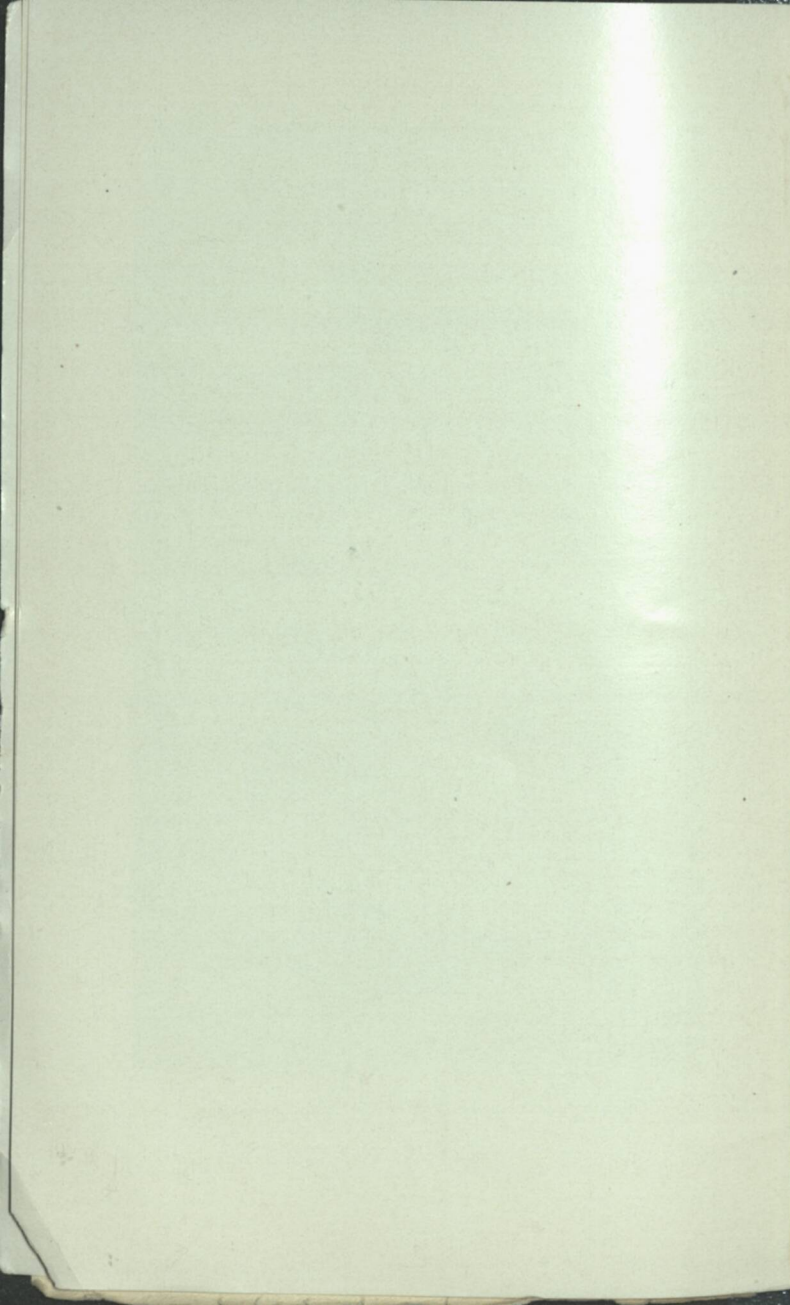


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# HANDICRAFT

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## *GERMAN METAL WORK IN THE GERMANIC MUSEUM OF HARVARD UNIVERSITY*

*By KUNO FRANCKE.*

THE fifty-five reproductions of German metal work, representing the development of this art from the twelfth to the eighteenth century, which have been presented to the Germanic Museum of Harvard University by distinguished citizens of Berlin and other German cities and are now on exhibition in Cambridge, cannot fail being of particular interest to the readers of a journal devoted to the cause of handicraft. A few remarks, therefore, about some selected specimens of this collection may not be amiss here. They are intended as a running commentary to the accompanying pictures.

Our first illustration presents types of Romanesque church vessels of the twelfth century and the early part of the thirteenth, a communion chalice of Westphalian make (No. 1) and a communion paten and chalice (Nos. 2 and 3) from a monastery near Innsbruck. These vessels are equally remarkable for the simplicity and dignity of their outline and for the grace and richness of their ornamentation. The forms of the chalices are compact, yet fully articulated; the round knob which

in both divides the cup proper from the shaft and foot gives an easy purchase for handling it; the decorations, both arabesques and figures, serve to accentuate and enrich the general contour, without in the least forcing themselves into the foreground. The same is true of the niello work and the inscriptions profusely covering both sides of the paten; one gains the impression that the artist could not help pouring out his whole religious feeling and thought into this work and yet knew very well how to constrain himself in giving form to it.

The second illustration shows the more fantastic and ornate forms of Gothic and Renaissance goblets. All three specimens of this group are of particular historical importance. No. 4 is a gift made in 1462 by King Corvinus of Hungary to the City Council of Vienna. No. 5 is a wedding present given to Luther in 1525 by the University of Wittenberg. No. 6 is crowned by the figure of Emperor Maximilian II, and is a work of the famous Nuremberg silversmith Wenzel Jamnitzer (1508-1588); its present owner is the German Emperor, William II, who generously allowed this reproduction to be made for us. Compared with the round concentric forms of the Romanesque chalices we see in these Gothic and Renaissance cups a tendency toward elongation, and toward manifold curving and branching out. What is hereby lost in unity and simplicity is gained in variety, picturesqueness and stateliness. Particularly effective in the Gothic specimens are the embossed bulbs, partly round, partly oval, which surround both the body

and the cover of the goblets, reflecting the light at different angles and producing a fanciful play of color about them — an effect which is still heightened by the free use of enamel on the flat surfaces.

The two following groups are taken from the magnificent table service of the old Hanse town of Lüneburg, which in the year 1600 consisted of some three hundred pieces, but, in consequence of the ravages of the Thirty Years' War and the destruction of civic independence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, has in course of time dwindled down to thirty-seven, owned by the Museum of Arts and Crafts at Berlin. Nos. 7, 8 and 9 are desert plates from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, distinguished by purity of form and chasteness of ornament. Nos. 10 and 11, loving cups belonging to the sixteenth century, are noteworthy for the religious symbolism of their decorative detail. The former represents in its plastic ornament the pedigree of Christ, the latter gives us a picture of militant Protestantism in the figure of Christ treading upon the dragon of Popery and in the various groups of priests and prelates worshipping the Babylonian Whore. Every one of the pieces of the Lüneburg silver service was a gift made by a citizen to the town, in commemoration of some event of private or public importance. The collection as a whole, therefore, is a striking instance of the spirit of civic devotion and pride which made possible the great era of German burgherdom in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.



The last illustration brings together a few specimens of the later Renaissance and Baroque style. Particular mention in this group deserves No. 13, a Nautilus goblet, by a Berlin master of the beginning of the eighteenth century. Civic art has now been superseded by princely art. Splendor and elegance has taken the place of solidity and firmness. That, however, even in the courtly art of the eighteenth century there was not a little of boldness of invention and delicacy of execution left, this exquisite little goblet emphatically testifies.

The whole collection is a noteworthy addition to the resources of Harvard University for the study of Germanic civilization, and gives, besides, striking evidence of the high state of efficiency reached by the electrotpe technique in contemporary Germany.

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*POTTERY:  
ITS LIMITATIONS AND POSSIBILITIES*

*By WILLIAM HAGERMAN GRAVES.*

A BRIEF review of so vast a field of human effort as the making of pottery is like the panoramic journey at the Paris Fair over the Trans-Siberian Railroad from St. Petersburg to Peking. Scarcely twenty minutes were needed for the trip. The glimpses it gave, however, of certain appearances of the vast domain of the Czars aroused definite impressions of the limitations and possibilities of their power. Words are poor substitutes for pictures and examples in presenting any subject within the range of the Arts and Crafts, but they may serve to urge a better appreciation, on the part of both the potter and his patron, of the forms and enrichments appropriate to the potter's materials.

Probably in no other of the Decorative Arts have there been applied and misapplied more patient labor and skill of execution than in the embellishment of pottery. Many of the most famous wares, such as the later Sèvres, show little trace of natural methods suitable to pottery. The English Wedgwood, imitating the cameo glass of the beautiful Portland Vase, suggests something of classic refinement, but is devoid of the life and freedom of plastic clay. Other English wares, Chelsea, Derby, the modern Doulton, have forms indicating some beauty of line, but, loaded with writhing masses of ornament, seem to be waiting the coming of a St.

George to release them from the dragon of Commercialism. The Japanese, unapproached in their marvelous facility of invention and skill in the use of clay, pastes and pigments, often spend the utmost labor and patience in making a pot resemble a bag, a wooden box or anything rather than what it is. But this is doubtless an expression of their peculiar sense of humor. We cannot resist the charm of anything that comes from the hand of the Japanese potter.

Pottery (speaking from the Dictionary) embraces everything made of "burnt clay." Porcelain is only distinguished from the more comprehensive term "Pottery" in the kind of clay used. When clay is rich in its basic element alumina and has a sort of plastic or unctuous "feel" it is termed "fat." In this condition it can be worked most easily, but will shrink up and crack to pieces in a high fire. To prevent this and also to make the glazes adhere in the second firing, the clay is made "lean" by the admixture of "grit" made of burnt clay ground up or silica in the form of fine sand or flints; in the case of the more elaborate preparations for porcelain, pure quartz crystals, ground to a fine powder. Kaolin, the most important ingredient of porcelain, consists of decomposed feldspar or granite rock. This rich form of alumina is found in its purest state in China, where it was washed down from granite hills a million years or so ago and deposited in the beds of ancient rivers. Porcelain is distinguished from other pottery in being whiter, harder, less fusible and slightly translucent. The Chinese

considered pottery just as good a basis for enamel decoration as porcelain.

The glazes and enamels that have been used from all time are made of the ingredients of glass, the glazes being transparent and the enamels being made opaque by the addition of the oxides of lead or tin. These enamels have a natural affinity for clay if it has been made sufficiently "lean" by the use of the element common to both, silica. The Egyptians had unlimited supplies of "fat" clay from the rich deposits of the Nile, but they did not understand the simple devices for making it lean, consequently their wonderful enamel colors could only be used on small objects like the mummy figures, seals and scarabs to be seen in the Museum. The Assyrians, on the other hand, attained a much greater proficiency in the use of these opaque glazes on burnt clay, the two inner walls of Babylon being covered with enameled tiles. In the royal palace of Nimrod was found a frieze representing a lion hunt which shows a feeling for harmony of color and skill in decorative arrangement that has hardly been surpassed. These tiles are in size about 9 x 12 x 4 inches thick, coarse and bubbly in texture, with a hard vitreous surface nearly 1-8 inch in thickness. A similar use of enameled tiles in large heavy pieces built into the walls can be seen in the New York Subway to-day. There are even traces of the "rough" and "bubbly" texture described above, but as they are to be seen from a distance the architects have kindly acknowledged the force of the precedent set by Nimrod's royal potter! The use



of tiles in a way truly appropriate to the materials of which they are made is still in its infancy in this country. Our fellow member, Mr. Henry Mercer, has given us a glimpse of its possibilities, notably in the Fenway Court and in the house of Mr. Horace Sears at Weston, where are examples of the best that has been done by both Mr. Mercer and the Grueby Company.

The first process in the art, after the preparation of the clay, the "throwing" or moulding of the clay on the potter's wheel, has been in use with few changes for sixty centuries. Fig. I is taken from a picture on an Egyptian tomb. It shows the kind of wheel in use about 4,000 B. C. and consists of a disk or round table on a pivot, which was spun by hand. Exactly this form of wheel is used in many parts of India to-day. Under the Ptolemies, a large wooden disk was added for the potter to keep the wheel revolving with his foot, an apparatus which differed in no respect from that shown in Fig. III, representing a scene in an Italian Majolica factory of the sixteenth century. This kind of wheel is still employed at Sèvres. The wheel at the Grueby works differs from this only in the substitution of a crank lever and pedal for the lower wheel, enabling the potter to get more efficiency out of a given amount of foot power.

The whole character of a vase may be determined by the potter at the wheel. The ease with which the plastic clay answers to the touch of hand, rising and falling and taking a whole succession of symmetrical shapes, is very fascinating to watch.



Homer compares the rhythm of a dance to the measured spin of a potter's wheel. The Greeks, as in every plastic art, reached the highest point of perfection in the shapes of their pottery as well as in its decoration. They limited themselves to a few different kinds of shapes or motives, avoiding the unusual or merely novel, striving always to set a new artistic record, but on the same track. As in architecture, they tried few experiments and consequently made few mistakes. Pericles would have found no pleasure in the Art Nouveau display at Turin last summer.

Unfortunately the freedom of touch given by the potter's hand is greatly injured by the practice of finishing the pot on the lathe to make the form more mechanically perfect, while at many potteries both wheel and lathe are discarded for the still more mechanical plaster mould. In the case of the Grueby, the hard finish sometimes given it by the potter's tools is softened by the thick enamels with which it is afterwards covered. The Roman unglazed ware of which Mr. Nickerson has given us such fine reproductions was made by a combined use of both wheel and mould.

The baking or firing of pottery has undergone as little change in principle as the moulding on the wheel. Fig. II shows a cross section of a kiln discovered at Corinth. Modern kilns differ from it only in having more places for admitting the fuel, the addition of flues and a cone shaped chimney over the dome. Pottery is usually fired once to bake the clay, when it is called "biscuit," and then

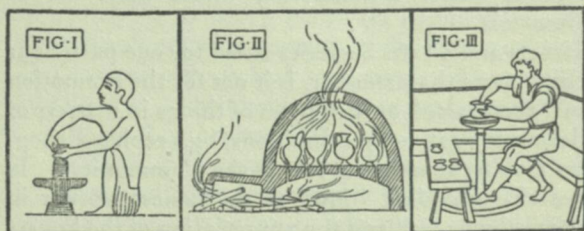
again to fuse the glaze, which is put on by dipping the pot into a bath of it, painting it or blowing it on. Some elaborately decorated porcelains like the Sèvres are fired a good many times at a succession of decreasing temperatures, as some pigments will not stand as much heat as others. This is why underglaze pottery like the early Majolica was limited to only two or three colors. The early Majolica also derived its soft mellow effect from the fact that the decoration was painted directly on the white enamel into which the vase or plate had been dipped. The pigments sunk into the slightly absorbent ground as they were painted on: the touch of the brush necessarily had to be rapid and certain, as there was no chance to rub out mistakes, and the design was consequently bold and broadly decorative. When it had been dipped in a thin, transparent glaze and fired, the slight blending of color with the white ground resulted in a simple charm and more truly decorative effect than is seen in the later examples, in which elaborate pictures (some even by Raphael) were painted on the hard surface of the enamel after it had been fired. The early Sèvres ware or "pâte tendre" is more beautiful than the later or "pâte dure," for the same reason. The Persians, who excelled in all the Decorative Arts, have furnished us examples of about all the fine effects that can be got in ceramics. Their influence seems to have extended further than that of any other potters who have used glazes and enamels, unless we possibly except the Chinese. Until the Ming period (1368-1644) the Chinese de-

pended for the decorative effect of their pottery and porcelain wholly upon the glazes themselves. Mr. Hugh Robertson has produced individual pieces of a beauty of glaze approaching the Chinese, though he has not made much use of the oriental forms, which wear his rare glazes to great advantage. The Grueby Pottery differs from Historical precedents not so much in the method of making as in decoration and texture. The undecorated pieces depend for effect upon whatever character may be given them on the potter's wheel, combined with any special beauty there may be in the color and texture, just as in the case of the oriental examples. In other pieces we have aimed at further decorative effect by modeling on them appropriate ornament in low relief, the crispness of which is softened and given a fictile character by the thick opaque enamels. Our direct precedent and inspiration for this style of decoration was the work of the famous French potter Delahersche, whose kilns are at Beauvais.

If Arts and Crafts Societies stand for one particular thing more than another, is it not for the promotion of "good taste" or the fitness of things in matters of decorative art — by exhibitions, by keeping a shop, by making themselves felt in the Community? Is not the attendant "joy" to the honest worker in doing things well and the appreciation of the honest purchaser in possessing them a sort of by-product rather than one of the raw materials of which the thing is made? The craftsman must himself change the conditions under which he works if he



wants them changed. The Public won't do it and the Society can't, but the Public will soon or late buy his goods if they are good. The evils of Commercialism as affecting art are the evils of bad taste and can be cured only by the example of good taste. William Morris succeeded not so much by what he said as by what he did, and the things he did changed public taste in England and America. The work of Clitis, a Greek artist who painted vases, was at one time in such demand that many potters were on his waiting list. With increased respect for the natural limitations of their crafts while realizing more fully their possibilities, many of our craftsmen are beginning to find themselves in the enviable position of the Greek painter of pottery.





*HONEST FURNITURE**By J. VAUGHAN DENNETT.*

THERE is certainly a growing demand from thinking people of good taste for simple and well made furniture, something entirely unlike that to be found in the ordinary furniture market. For those not compelled to consider price it is often difficult, if not impossible in some cases, to obtain the things required, even if made to order by large firms. What chance, then, has the person in moderate circumstances to furnish his house in accordance with his taste and desires?

Before furniture was made in wholesale lots in large factories by those who know little of design and the traditions of the craft, and sold by them to retail dealers who know less, the consumer stood a good chance of getting what he wanted, for being in direct communication with the master cabinet maker — designer and workman — good results would naturally follow.

The present-day conditions in furniture manufacturing are far from perfect and do not meet the requirements of a large class. By no means is the manufacturer to blame, unless he be also the retailer, in which case culpability certainly exists in large measure. But the buyer must share this blame, for it is he who compromises by taking that which is not quite up to his standard, by following fads and fashions, and by his continual and constant demand for cheapness: destroyers of any art!

Of course, if the demand for good and simple things were made insistent by many people, it would be supplied and that at once. Probably there are few who give the subject a thought or who care one way or the other; but there is a small minority who want good furniture and will have no other, and these must be supplied from outside the furniture trade, so called. Furniture buying is like clothes buying, in a way, and should be approached in the same manner.

When communities are again willing to support cabinet makers, competent workmen will be on hand ready and able to produce as good work as ever was; perhaps this time is far off or maybe it is nearly here, but it will surely come; until then only a portion of the people can live with honest things. With even a fair encouragement, existing conditions could be greatly improved, and work nearly equal to that of the eighteenth century might be produced at a cost no greater than that asked for the best things at the furniture stores. Inability to see the wares before buying, and instant want may cause the store visit, frequently followed by unending regret. Most cabinet makers could give their patrons clear ideas in regard to the subject at hand, and a reasonable wait with ultimate satisfaction is certainly preferable to the case of vain regret.

The Arts and Crafts movement has set a great many people thinking about some of their surroundings and of the unnatural conditions under which they are made; this has already done some good and may be of lasting benefit even if the pres-

*EDITORIAL*

PROFESSOR FRANCKE's interesting description of silverware at the Germanic Museum of Harvard University, which we are fortunate in being able to publish in this number, suggests a few words on the use of Museums to craftsmen.

This beautiful and varied collection of reproductions of German silversmiths work, a few of which we illustrate, is for purposes of study and inspiration practically as good as if it consisted of originals. But this is only one among many things of vital interest to craftsmen of various kinds which are to be seen in the Germanic and other Museums of Cambridge. The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston is rich in original examples of Greek and Japanese pottery, in metal work of different periods and of diverse civilizations, in wood-carving, embroideries, and in examples of other handicrafts. Most of our great cities now possess Museums where examples of the beautiful arts of the past are gathered together. How much use of these treasures is made by the craftsmen? How many craftsmen who have the opportunity to study these instructive and inspiring things make the most of these opportunities? How many employers of craftsmen send their workers to the Museums for purposes of study?

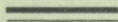
We do not urge upon craftsmen to directly copy the work of the past; but we do urge the value of constant and painstaking study and analysis of the most beautiful things; of the constant comparison



of ones own work with the best things in their kind which are within one's reach. To truly appreciate the excellence of proportion, the delicacy of feeling, the appropriateness of form and of ornament in the finest things : to be familiar with these excellencies ; to hold these standards constantly before one is certainly to improve the work one is doing. We do not make enough use nor the best use of our museums. We walk through them till we are tired instead of giving careful and affectionate study to one or two fine things and coming away refreshed and encouraged to return soon again to renew our inspirations.

. . . . .

It is with regret that with this last number of its second volume we bring HANDICRAFT to an end. If it has served in any degree to stimulate right endeavor in the handicrafts it has served the purpose with which it was started. If we now bring it to a conclusion, it is mainly in order that we may devote more energy to the carrying out in practical work of the principles and of the ideals for which it has contended. As the need arises or opportunity offers, the Society hopes from time to time to publish separate articles or reprints, which will in effect continue the work of the magazine. H. L. W.





# GRUEBY POTTERY

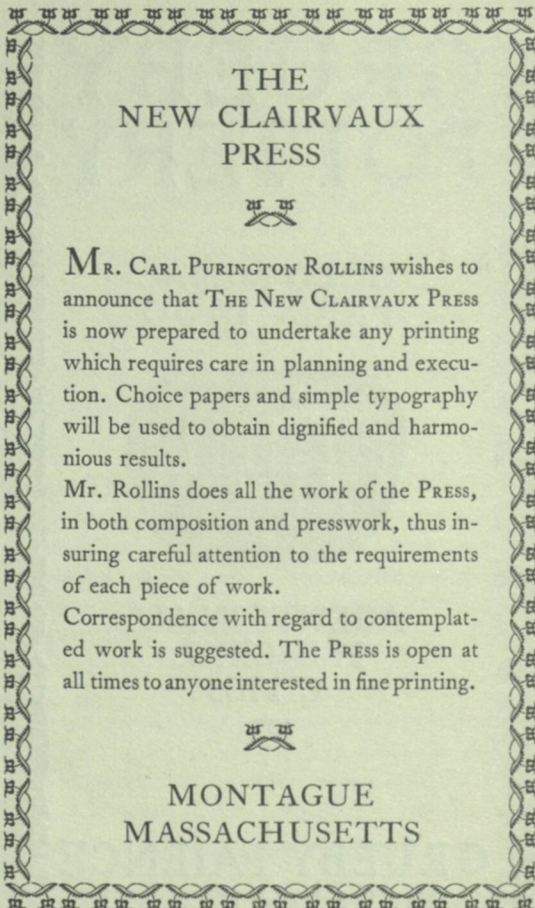
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## JANUARY NUMBER

Continued the Essays on WHISTLER'S Art and Personality, which have been appearing since last September, and contained five beautiful colour supplements together with one hundred and thirty other illustrations.

## FEBRUARY NUMBER

Contains an article on the Exhibition of the National Academy in New York by CHARLES H. CAFFIN.

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**GUSTAV STICKLEY**  
THE CRAFTSMAN BUILDING  
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**O**WING to the recent destruction of our printing office by fire, and the consequent confusion and difficulty in replacing the material, the present number of HANDICRAFT will be found somewhat lacking in unity of appearance with the preceding numbers, and is late in appearing.

THE HEINTZEMANN PRESS.

**B**UT the cause that is most certainly destructive to artistic value is the passing of the piece through many hands, so that the finished article is not any one man's work, but only the lifeless product of the many departments of a factory. This, in addition to a low standard of design, is no doubt the chief cause of the poor quality of decorative value in the mass of jewellery and plate and the many so-called ornamental objects that are seen in shop windows. On the other hand, the work of the simplest Oriental jeweller has that precious quality of rightness of purpose and distinct human interest. It bears on its face the evidence of the one man's clear intention; it tells its story as the work of a man's hand and not that of a machine, for he has beaten somewhat of his own soul and brain into the simply-wrought object of gold or silver. For none of those mighty agencies of modern times, of steam machinery, of business calculation, of backing by money, can possibly stand in the place of that divine combination of artist and craftsman that alone can as surely bring forth the good work, as the union of soul and body must go to the making of the most perfect living being."

GERTRUDE JEKYLL.